

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 2245

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TU, CY, GR
SUBJ: TURK CONCERN OVER CONGRESSIONAL INACTION

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY WITH REQUEST THAT
IT BE BROUGHT TO SECRETARY'S ATTENTION ALONG WITH SUMMARY OF
REFTEL.

REF ANKARA 2239

1. I MET ALONE WITH FONMIN ESENBEL AT HIS REQUEST WEDNESDAY
AFTERNOON (MARCH 19). ESENBEL WAS DEEPLY DISTURBED BY THE
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE'S DECISION TO POSTPONE ACTION
ON THE SCOTT-MANSFIELD BILL. HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN GROWING
AND WIDESPREAD FEELING HERE THAT TURK RESTRAINT IN
FACE OF CUTOFF HAD APPARENTLY CONVEYED TO AMERICAN OFFICIALS
FALSE IMPRESSION THAT TURKEY "WAS BEING SOFTENED UP" AS A RESULT
OF CUTOFF LEGISLATION. IT WAS EVIDENTLY BEING CONCLUDED, AT
LEAST IN SOME US QUARTERS, THAT THE DANGER OF TURKISH RETALIATION
WAS PASSING. UNFORTUNATELY, SAID ESENBEL, TURKISH PARLIAMENTARIANS
INAN AND UNSAL WHO ARE NOW IN WASHINGTON FOR NORTH ATLANTIC
PARLIAMENTARIANS MEETINGS HAVE REACHED, AND HAVE BEEN REPORTING BACK,
THE SAME CONCLUSION. ESENBEL SAID THAT SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS
COMMITTEE'S "OBVIOUS STALLING" IS TAKEN HERE AS FURTHER EVIDENCE
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OF US MISREADING OF THE TURKISH MOOD.

2. THE TURKS, SAID ESENBEL, HAD NOT SOFTENED UP AND WERE NOT GOING TO. THE ONLY REASON, HE EMPHASIZED, THAT RETALIATION HAD NOT BEEN TAKEN IN RECENT DAYS WAS THE VERY GREAT CONFIDENCE THAT TURKISH LEADERSHIP PLACED IN YOU PERSONALLY AND IN YOUR ASSURANCES THAT THE AID CUTOFF LEGISLATION COULD AND WOULD BE REVERSED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IN THE FACE OF THE GROWING FEELING THAT THE USG WAS MISREADING THE TURKISH MOOD (AND THE APPARENT BELIEF, IN SOME QUARTERS AT LEAST, THAT TURKEY WAS NOT ONLY NOT GOING TO RETALIATE AGAINST THIS PRESSURE, BUT WAS IN FACT BEGINNING TO YIELD TO IT) THE FORCES OF RESTRAINT COULD NOT PREVENT RETALIATION MUCH LONGER.

3. ESENBEL SAID THAT IT APPEARED THAT A NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS (HE DID NOT RPT NOT KNOW WHETHER HE WOULD BE ITS FOREIGN MINISTER) AND IF THE STATUS QUO CONTINUED, THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD SURELY HAVE TO ADDRESS ITSELF TO THE SUBJECT OF CONGRESSIONAL INACTION. IN THIS CONNECTION, ESENBEL SAID THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT BEFORE YOUR VISIT WAS SCHEDULED AND WHEN HE WAS DISCUSSING WITH PARTY LEADERS HIS PROSPECTIVE MEETING WITH YOU IN BRUSSELS, ECEVIT HAD WARNED THAT THE AMERICANS WERE ALREADY BECOMING TOO COMPLACENT AS A RESULT OF THE LACK OF SPECIFIC TURKISH RETALIATORY MEASURES. AT THAT TIME ECEVIT RECOMMENDED PICKING OUT ONE USG INSTALLATION AND MOVING AGAINST IT AND DOING SO BEFORE THE TWO OF YOU MET IN BRUSSELS. ESENBEL HAD RESISTED THIS SUGGESTION AT THE TIME BUT HE REPEATED HE IS NOW CONVINCED THAT THE FORCES FAVORING SUCH RETALIATION CANNOT BE HELD OFF MUCH LONGER.

4. ESENBEL SEEMED PARTICULARLY TROUBLED THAT YOU WOULD NOT BE BACK IN WASHINGTON UNTIL AFTER THE SENATE HAD RECESSED AND THAT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE ACTION IN THE SENATE COULD PROBABLY NOT COME BEFORE THE MIDDLE OF APRIL. "THIS IS NOT THE TIMETABLE DR. KISSINER DISCUSSED WITH US WHEN HE WAS HERE," HE SAID, AND HE ASKED IF I WOULD NOT, IN YOUR ABSENCE, GO BACK TO WASHINGTON AND TRY TO IMPRESS AGAIN ON THE CONGRESS THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION HERE. I RESPONDED THAT I WOULD BE GLAD TO GO BACK AND HELP IN THE CONGRESSIONAL EFFORT, BUT THERE WAS NO POINT IN RETURNING PREMATURELY, THAT IS BEFORE VOTES WERE AT LEAST TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED.

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ESENBEL ACCEPTED THIS BUT ASKED THAT I CONVEY TO YOUR SOONEST HIS MOST SERIOUS CONCERN OVER THE SENATE'S INACTION I SAID I WOULD, OF COURSE, DO THIS BUT I ENDED OUR CONVERSATION BY REMINDING HIM THAT TURKISH VOICES OF RESTRAINT HAD BEEN SPEAKING IN THE LONG-TERM TURKISH NATIONAL INTERESTS, AND I EMPHASIZED THE CONTINUING NECESSITY OF PREVENTING THE BARNBURNERS HERE FROM STARTING THE PROCESS OF DISMANTLING THOSE INTERESTS. ESENBEL AGREED THAT TURKISH RESTRAINT HAD BEEN IN TURKEY'S NATIONAL INTERESTS BUT ONCE AGAIN EMPHASIZED

HIS BELIEF THAT WITHOUT SOME SPECIFIC CONGRESSIONAL STEPS IT COULD NOT BE MAINTAINED MUCH LONGER.

5. COMMENT: I SHARE ESENBEL'S CONCERN OVER THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SFRC'S DECISION EARLIER THIS WEEK, AND FOR SOME TIME NOW I TOO HAVE HAD THE UNEASY FEELING THAT TURKISH RESTRAINT HAS BEEN MISREAD IN SOME QUARTERS IN THE US. WHILE IN RECENT DAYS THE TURKS SEEM TO BE MORE INTERESTED THAN BEFORE IN NOT LETTING THE AID CUTOFF TOTALLY INHIBIT THEIR MANEUVERABILITY WITH RESPECT TO THE CYPRUS SITUATION, IT IS INCREASINGLY OBVIOUS THAT THEY ARE DETERMINED, IN THE ABSENCE OF CORRECTIVE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, TO BEGIN DISMANTLING THE US-TURKISH RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT MUCH FURTHER DELAY. TODAY'S PROSPECT THAT A NEW ANKARA GOVERNMENT MAY AT LONG LAST BE EMERGING, HOWEVER COULD GIVE US A BIT, BUT PROBABLY ON A BIT, MORE TIME THAN WE MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE HAD.
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